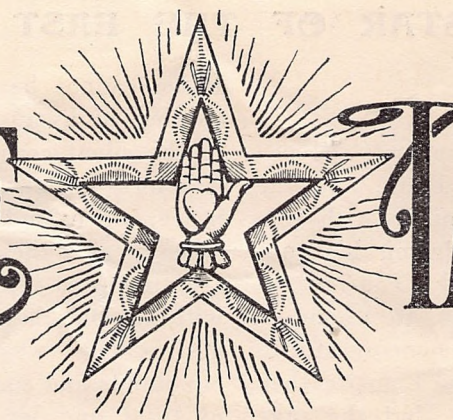


STAR OF THE EAST



A Monthly Journal, devoted to the propagation of the VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY, the Universal Teaching of Souls' Unfoldment

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WEAKNESS AND STRENGTH, GLOOM AND SUNSHINE.

All of us who have any experience in life have found out that they are had in the various channels of circumstances meeting us.

One is the result of the other, and all lead to the freedom of soul, mind, and body. Would we know happiness unless we had experience in tears?

Would we know strength unless we had been weak? No; the depth leads to the heights, and knowledge proper is only had by personal experience.

We can read, sing, or pray, or live without either of those; but we find that we shall not know until we realise from within.

Life is a constant "up and down," and its activity comes to us by waves—one will be that of joy, the other will be the sting of suffering; but all will bring man to the highest point of glory in the final, and he will then know that he could not have reached such position unless he had experienced suffering as well as happiness.

Were we here to stay, it might be one of the saddest truths that we must rise and gain wisdom by weakness and tears, and then it would be to our greatest interests to avoid knowledge, since we cannot have it without pain; but pain being the method by which we leave this undeveloped plane, we should hasten to learn how to rule conditions and conquer them, as in that way alone we rise into greater strength and poise as souls. No man can become wise unless he knows tribulations and sorrows, and no man can be another's teacher who has not had personal experience in all things. Our higher and sacred selves can be brought into expression only by the performance of the whole duties which evolve upon us as souls, and as long as we hold to things which prevent us from activity to this end, we cannot know ourselves or the sacredness of our mission in this body.

Look at everything around us, and we shall find that all things are in constant motion, and while

they are in motion they come into contact with everything, and learn a lesson for each contact.

Before we know we shall find ourselves weak and weary, but after we see the great purpose in all. We become stronger and stronger, and wisdom comes with strength.

Life is weakness and strength, gloom and sunshine, and we should first learn that none of these changes are permanent, but only momentary—and yet they are factors in making God known to us, and that is the purpose of our being here. Did we not benefit by those experiences here, but had to wait until hereafter, it would not be of much encouragement to seek unfoldment, as hereafter is, perhaps, far away; but we benefit each moment by what we learn, not only mentally, but spiritually, for it helps us to see that which we have to live out in this body, and it brings things into our hands more readily.

We must learn not to be disappointed, whatever comes, but ready to accept it as being the means by which we shall know more of the wonders of God in man. Sorrow teaches us to overcome, and joy helps us to teach to others the same power. Go on and on, and know that life is filled with multitudes of experiences, which bring to us the wisdom, the result of weakness and strength, gloom and sunshine.

Gloom and sunshine will teach us that both are expressions from the same power, and directed by the same divine law; and also that we could not have one without the other, as they are teachers helping us to understand that we are becoming purified and fit to enter into higher planes of realisation.

Do not complain or feel that it is "injustice," that we have what we make—and it could not be otherwise, cause and effect being the fundamental principles upon which all law is based.

Weakness shall become strength, and gloom shall become joy; but this cannot be until we have learnt how to see, live, and apply them.

Nothing is still, no matter how weak; to the contrary, all things are moving on and on.

When we can understand the one-ness in all things we shall see this, and all purposes shall also become clear, and the truth that "one circumstance aids the other to one and the same Goal," which is the realisation that everything in life is on the upward path to the consciousness of its one-ness with God.

STAR OF THE EAST

THE VEDA.

The philosophy of India is very ancient. Greece drew liberally, while Pythagoras, Plato, and the dramatist, it is believed, were familiar with this teaching. Alexander the Great, during his conquest of India, was deeply impressed. You remember how he visited an Indian sage, to whom he offered every luxury if he would accompany him to his kingdom. The sage refused. The Emperor then threatened him with instant death, but the sage replied that "Neither could man kill, nor be killed: that the real man was above and beyond the death of the body." Inward, the Hindu turned his vision to explore the reason of being, to solve the mystery of himself and his relation to the Supreme.

In the early times India was ruled by Kings, Rishis, or men of wisdom. Under their benign influence and teachings, she attained great glory, and it was in these days of national strength that the Veda had its beginning. Oral traditionists committed the sacred verses, and so perfectly was this work done that the syllables, even the letters, were counted. The word "Veda" means "sacred Wisdom." These poems are religious in their character. Max Muller tells us that "India has so clearly given us the evolution of thought that we can trace the child age in the hymns of praise to gods and goddesses personifying the forces of Nature." Later on they became restricted to a trinity typifying the earth, air, and sun, until they unfold the monistic conception of the One Self—the All Pervading. The metre of these hymns is very musical, and serves to help the soul of man to realise the rhythm and harmony of the Universe.

Om was pronounced at the beginning of each Veda, to represent the spirit or essence in nature as unified with the spirit in man and with the divine Self or Brahman.

The Upanishads is the heart and Soul of the Vedas. From this source is drawn the great philosophical teachings. The word etymologically infers a session: therefore some scholars suggest that it may refer to the gatherings of the Masters and their disciples in the cool, pleasant forest just beyond the village. "Let him perform his exercises," says the Upanishads, "in a place of level, pure, delightful in its sounds, its water and its bowers, full of shelters and caves." It is by studying one's self that one rises into higher knowledge, becoming conscious of the Universal Spirit—the Self in all U. and M.P.

LESSON.

PEACE, THE PORTAL TO REALIZATION.

There can be no realization of God within until we have peace with the world, and rest on that peace from within. All the researches for the understanding of the higher life must be preceded by the seeking for peace. It is of the most need, and it has the greatest power in all things. The soul and its power cannot be realized until one has found that strength and equilibrium which is the result of a perfect peaceful mind. There is no use in going into silence for anything until we have been there again and again to find that peace which the soul is dependent upon for its well-being.

Peace cannot be had by tuition, or by prayers, singing of hymns, or reading of books, but only in the silent corner, and it is there we must find it before we find anything else. If we do not have peace, we cannot have the contentment in which alone there is the wisdom, strength, and love which are all united into one expression of the God-hood within. Oh, that we could understand to have no desires when we enter into the silence, but open our minds and souls and senses to the great inflow of light and let that light permeate our whole being. Only in that way can we become ready for things higher than that which the senses seek. Everything is peace, and it is manifest in the chaos of all matter. When we seek peace we deal with everything from near and far, and attract to us the finer in all compounded life.

Peace alone makes us ready for things higher; there is no use in seeking anything until we have that in our soul. There is no use in trying to do anything for others until we first have peace within our own selves. Do not forget that Monday is the day for peace, as its vibration brings the power by which such communion is best had. Use its stillness, its order, its fitness, and the soul will come forth in all its beauty and splendour, and the mind will be at ease as it has never been before.

Only when we have become in tune with the Infinite in this wise can we grow spiritually, and not until then.

We have often spoken of how we should go into silence without wanting anything whatever, but surrender absolutely and let the light and power fill us to overflowing; and in that way only can we realize our relationship with God the Absolute.

Before we ask for anything else, let us ask for peace—peace with the world, peace with ourselves, peace with the air, water, fire, and earth, and peace with every soul in the Universe. Peace, nothing but peace—say this to yourselves, sing it to yourselves—and when you speak to others speak it with your whole being, so that those with whom we speak might feel it in their souls, minds, and bodies, and you will have cured all the pain they have ever had in their being.

We have peace-communion in the third principle which we have been used to call three o'clock p.m. Sundays, but that principle is the same all over the Universe; so when our mind is held upon three o'clock p.m. Sundays, we will be all united in peace-communion, no matter what the hand of the clock is in different countries. Be with us, all our students, at three p.m. Sundays, and there will be peace in our souls and we will send it out all over the earth. But let us meet often in silence, and remember that the breathing at these times should be very gentle and inhaling.

Peace is the power which humanity needs, and let us seek and have that first, of all things, and we will have realization afterwards.

SYMBOLS.

Everything we see, feel, and know or do is an expression or symbol of Divinity. Whenever we look upon the form of man, woman, or child, the very form itself becomes a symbol of that which is most divine.

STAR OF THE EAST

When we open our eyes it is a symbol of the divine light, which in itself is the symbol of that power which maketh the divine intelligence, that maketh all things light. The air we breathe becomes a symbol of Immortality, and every object, animate and inanimate, is a symbol of God, the All-pervading Spirit.

"O God, when I think of my body, I am Thy servant and Thou art my Master;

When I look at my soul, I am Thy part and Thou are one stupendous whole;

But when I realize my true nature, I am divine and one with Thee—

The Absolute Spirit: such is my conception of my relation to Thee."

Nothing becomes so strong as does the Altar upon which is set the emblems of the divine power of God in all things in nature.

Those who do not like it show that they have not as yet evolved to the full understanding of the soul in all things and the law in nature working through all things. When we understand that the lights upon the Altar are the symbol of divine wisdom, standing above as conqueror of all darkness and ignorance, and that such wisdom is eternal, one cannot help but feel stronger than ever that one is in the presence of the Divine Spirit.

When one sees flowers, and knows that they are the symbol of the divine powers and gifts in man, those two symbols become so strongly active in one's mind and soul that one cannot help but realize that one is part and portion of the eternal. Then comes the meekness, purity, and divinity of the soul, and its flames of divine love symbolized by the burning of the incense. The water, cleansing as it is, and therefore a divine symbol of the "Word which took flesh and came amongst us," which is the everlasting truth, cleansing of all ignorance; we cannot help but feel and see that we stand (while before the Altar) in the presence of our Immortal Self, such as we were while in the great Ocean of the divine Oversoul. Is anything stronger, purer, and more uniting soul with soul? And those who are awakened to the great unity—how can they help but feel nearer to God on such occasions? But those whose souls' eyes have not been opened, whose senses are as yet dormant—how can they understand? And we know that as long as the world does not understand it will reject—yes, it will condemn.

Symbols are the only power of the soul, because all things are symbols; and the truth of them, and their greatness, one can only know when one has evolved to the understanding of the power they give.

"As individual egos, we form part of the Lord, whose body extends over the whole phenomenal Universe, of which He pervades every atom." (Swami, Abhedananda.)

When we understand this, then we shall not reject, but seek deeper than ever before to solve the lesson which each symbol is meant to teach us. Were everything as plain given as to make it understood to our senses, it would be bereft of all its power and there would be no spiritual meaning left in it, because man's mind is in such a stagnated condition that it cannot understand even the very smallest of the truth.

"PEARLS BY THE WAY-SIDE."

A mighty Maze, but not without a plan: A wild,
where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot;
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
He who vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs, What
planets circle other suns,
What varied beings people other stars,
May tell why heaven has made us as we are.

—Alexander Pope.

"BRING A SOUL WITH YOU."

Hope not to cure of sin to self is dead;
Forget it in love's service, and the debt
Thou canst not pay the Angels shall forget:
Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;
Save thou a soul and it shall save thy own.

—Whittier.

"The whole world is a great Sanctuary, well devised and surely maintained as a strong, well-ordered house."—Lao Tze.

"Knowledge is the things known, and the mind which knows."—Song Celestial.

Large bodies, worlds and universes, are the centres of still greater bodies; God is the centre of all, His circle Infinite."—C.

"Some experiences we have worked out already, some we are working out now at the present time, and some will bear fruit in the future. If one labour to root out sinful thoughts, and impresses pure, healthful in their place, the fruit of our experiences will be clear and true, and the result will be satisfactory and rich. Some of our experiences have been finished—worked out, and they have disappeared. So by a proper understanding of the fruits of our acts we may avoid many pitfalls by controlling them now, and we should use energy to obliterate all results of past evil deeds and tendencies, remembering that good can only come as a result of good—but never good from evil."—Raya Yoga.

The following questions and answers, given by the Swami ABHEDANANDA, after his lecture on the philosophy of good and evil:—

Q.—"What does Vedanta say regarding the inheritance of original sin?"

A.—"Vedanta does not recognize such thing as original sin, which one is bound and destined to inherit."

Q.—"What is the meaning and cause of sin?"

A.—"Sin means selfishness. It is the result of ignorance of one's own true nature or divine self."

Q.—"How do you explain good and evil by the theory of evolution?"

A.—"In the process of evolution that which appears beneficial to us under certain conditions is called good, and that which is injurious to us is called evil; our own minds make to us good and evil."

Q.—"Is Vedanta optimistic or pessimistic?"

A.—"Vedanta is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It inquires into the nature of good and evil,

STAR OF THE EAST

describes their independent relation, and ultimately leads the human minds to the realization of divinity as the life and soul of all phenomenal objects."

Q.—"Is not the Creator of evil separated from the Creator of good?"

A.—"Vedanta teaches evolution, and not special creation; consequently it has no need of unscientific conceptions of the extra cosmic creators—the one of good and the other of evil."

(To be Continued.)

BREATHINGS.

"They who draw in the breath, to feed the flame of thought.

And breathe it forth, to waft that thought on high:

Governing each ventage of the opening air,
Lest one sigh pass that helpeth not the soul."

ATTAIN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION BY THE PRACTICE OF THE PRANAYAMA.

"Prana" is the nervous motion of the system; combined with the Akasa it is the human body. By throwing out and retaining the breath we draw in life force and energy from the Universe. By restraint of Prana (Pranayama) we control the motions of the body and our thoughts. The vitality we gain is Prana—the force which gives us power to think and will.

SYDNEY LETTER.

Beloved readers, much peace.

Our labours since we returned to this city have been very great. Vedanta, being new to the people here, and because of its great scope of thought, has not been fully understood amongst the people in this place, and the consequence thereof is that the people come to us now asking for information as to its nature. Vedanta being not only a theoretical study, but more—a devotional life in practice—it is difficult for minds who have become used to the recognition of external things alone to understand its grandeur, beauty, and divinity. Indeed, Vedanta teaches that "We must live the life" in order to know. Those at the head of the work here in our absence have all done their very best as far as they have understood, for which they are given due credit; but the people, being used to limitation, have the idea that Vedanta is a creed which makes a bar between this and that creed, and religious methods; and this being a misunderstanding in the minds of the people, here we have in consequence been surrounded with inquiries as to its liberality and foundation. All shows that the people have been awake to seek during the eleven months we have been absent, and a number of strangers have come to our meetings and they are casting their lot amongst us; and, this being so, we feel encouraged, knowing that in due time we will have a large organization here and a good work will be done.

Though some people have moved away from the city, and others became attracted in other directions, yet it is gratifying to see that, in a place of

worldliness like this, there are still true seekers for the liberation and help which Vedanta gives to all who are earnest souls.

We have fitted up rooms for a permanent Centre here, which will be known as the "Sri Krishna Vedanta Centre of Sydney."

Though it is difficult to find rooms in this place suitable for the high work that will be done here, we have succeeded in finding most quiet and comfortable club rooms fitted up in harmony with sanitary and peaceful surroundings, which are needed in order to have the finer vibrations upon which we are dependent for the successful onwardness of the work.

We invite one and all to come, see, and hear.

A time is now at hand when the soul demands to know when the mind paves its way beyond the external to the real, and when it finds that for which it is seeking there will be peace. Such time is now at hand.

We are thankful for the work we have been permitted to do here and in New Zealand, having, in the latter place, three splendid clubs, going onward in advancement most admirably. From communications we have weekly, we find that "all are one," and it is gratifying to read in the same how one speaks of the lovely qualities of the other, and how our Secretaries in those clubs give us to understand the high esteem in which all are held between themselves. Officers and members are one, all speaking of the love and tenderness they bear one to the other. It is joy to receive such reports weekly, and it promises to become a great power in unity for good in the future in those places. We feel sure that it will be such in this place hence, and that, by the harmonious work which will be done in this place, the emancipation which Vedanta brings will reach far and wide to enlighten souls. As soon as we understand to bring out and recognize the good qualities in our fellow-men, and overlook what faults they have, we shall become a power for good throughout eternity.

This beautiful and promising country is waiting for spiritual light, and as soon as it comes there will be a different state of affairs than it is now. We will remain in this place until the work is in good working order, and those who now are enquiring find out what Vedanta is and its object with man. We have had letters from Auckland (N.Z.), from some hungry souls, asking us not to pass by when we make our return visit to that country. We rejoice to find that more and more hunger for the truth is being manifested as time passes on.

In Europe and America Vedanta is making phenomenal progress, and people clamour for more teachers. We hope to be able to prepare teachers to go from place to place in this part of the world and help the clubs along to higher understanding and life of Vedanta.

Work, oh, work! for the day is near when the great harvest shall be gathered in, and those in darkness shall see the divine light within themselves. All communications should be sent to J. S. Warner, P.O. Box 1064, Sydney, Australia.—Yours for Freedom of the human soul,

SISTER AVABAMIA.